

# TSIRT: New training facility viewed by skilled members of Latvian Army

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soldiers, most using skills and tools acquired in their civilian occupations and with building materials either removed from other camp buildings scheduled for demolition or by “making do” with limited shelf stock on hand.

The renovated “messhalls” feature modern training equipment not available to the World War II trainee who ate his meal there, including computers and digital projection equipment, augmenting instruction in tactics and procedures with the most current “lessons learned.” Realistic simulated enemy equipment allows the soldier to see and work with the potentially dangerous or life-threatening equipment and conditions they may encounter overseas in the safety of the classroom environment.

The “lanes training” area of the facility, an empty field that was left after the demolition of old barracks, takes lessons learned in the classroom and places them into realistic scenarios. This training includes level I anti-terrorism, mine/counter-mine warfare, booby traps, a force protection sniper corridor, personnel/vehicle checkpoint operations, country orientation, media awareness and medevac. According to Maj. Max Kurt Velte, Task Force Victory Assistant Operations Officer, the “Soldier Field exceeds US Army Forces Command standards and will provide soldiers an all in one training complex within marching distance of barracks and dining and troop service facilities.

It will be a turn-key facility that’s convenient and economical.”

Officers of the Latvian Army, in Sacramento for a Partnership for Peace Program meeting, visited Camp Roberts on October 7th to review the new training complex. Latvia is an eastern European Baltic nation that was among the first to break away from the former Soviet Union. The Latvian Army was among the first to perform the United Nations peacekeeping (PKO) missions in the Balkans and are considered experts in NATO standards for training soldiers for peacekeeping missions. “It is important for us to hear him say that, that this matches what their training standard is,” said Maj. Velte.

As a highly-flexible training complex, the Camp Roberts TSIRT can be adapted to present training scenarios in the different “theaters of operations” that California Army National Guard soldiers could operate in, including the United Nations’ peacekeeping missions in Kosovo and Bosnia. Officers in charge of the TSIRT were seeking feedback from the Latvians as to how the Camp Roberts facility compares to the NATO training facilities they utilized during their PKO rotations in the Balkans.

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“This meets the same standards as we train to in NATO,” said Capt. Juris Platonous of the Latvian Army. Platonous served in the Balkans during the early days of the U.N. peacekeeping mission there and understands the value of the training offered at the TSIRT. “I was in a battalion that is sending troops to missions all the time...I did that for four or five years.”

The Latvian Army is also a member of the coalition forces in Iraq, according to Lt. Col. Martins Liberts. “The same battalion (that Platonous had come from) is providing troops in Iraq. We are sustaining company-plus all the time.”

Work on the site included the discovery and restoration of a fountain and pond originally constructed by Italian prisoners-of-war who were held at Camp Roberts during World War II, one of two fountains known to still exist on the post.

The TSIRT construction crew also added contemporary adornments to the fountain and pool to honor California Guard soldiers who have given their lives in the line of duty in the Global War on Terrorism. Camp Roberts will have a formal dedication of the “Freedom Fountain” at a later date.



Latvian Army officers, who are considered experts in peace-keeping operations, bring lessons learned from their peace-keeping experiences and give a thumbs up to the new TSIRT complex at Camp Roberts.

Camp Roberts  
By the  
Numbers

Economic Impact

In 2003 Camp Roberts had a positive economic impact totaling \$32,221,484 (yes, that’s 32 million dollars) on the people and businesses of California

Capital Assets


3.5 mil square feet facilities  
1,044 buildings  
42,814 acres  
81.5 miles improved roads  
63.5 miles unimproved  
5 miles of railway  
200 miles of tank trails

Workforce

84% military  
16% civilian  
Total Fulltime = 444  
Average Salary = \$49,345

Facility Improvements

Construction Projects FY 2003 - \$5 Mil  
Construction Projects FY 2004 - \$11.9 million  
Projected Construction Projects FY2005 - \$13.7 million





California National Guard soldiers perform triage and search and rescue during a simulated chemical and nuclear weapons attack.

CERFP: Soldiers practice search, rescue and evacuation techniques

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Gen. Thomas Eres, believed that California’s “tpotential for terrorism warranted the creation five additional teams for the state. “We’re planning on something like this occurring,” said Col. Keith Jones, Commander of the 49th Combat Support Command, the CERFP’s senior command. “It’s much safer, and more prudent, to plan for it.”

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Camp Roberts’ old World War II barracks areas, no longer in use, provided an “urban” environment for soldiers to practice search, rescue and evacuation techniques. “Victims,” many of them soldiers from the already certified “CERFP-South,” were outfitted with realistic-looking wounds and performed roles that a CERFP soldier might encounter in an actual incident

response. Even the irregularities of the weather during their training provided unintended opportunities: the more-typical Camp Roberts heat provided challenges for the soldiers to meet as they trained in their heavy protective gear and the cold rains and gale-force winds provided challenges not normally encountered in a typical training event.

After the scene is secured, search and rescue teams bring victims to a treatment area for decontamination. Those who are able to walk are led through a shower tent, where contaminants are scrubbed and rinsed off, while those brought in by stretcher teams have their stretcher placed on roller-conveyers and are treated “assembly-line” style. All victims are then checked for contamination before being allowed to

proceed on to medical treatment. Once stabilized or treated, the victims are then loaded onto the appropriate form of evacuation transport and taken from the scene.

VITAL ROLE

It costs \$1.4 million to equip a CERFP team, according to Bernatz, and an additional \$500,000 a year to maintain each team. Because of the expense of providing such specialized training, members of the CERFP are exempt from deployment to the active Army missions the National Guard is supporting elsewhere in the world during their

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Capt. Daniel Heany

24-month tour. They still play a vital role in the California National Guard’s responsibility for Homeland Defense, however. “We live in a new world today,” Bernatz says. “We live in a world where an enemy has brought a war back to our shores.”

CERFP-North is now ready to be there should the unthinkable happen again. “A lot of us got into the National Guard for national defense,” said Capt. Daniel Heany. “You go into it expecting this kind of scenario.”